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Note from the Publisher

Dear fellow Birdwatchers,

**Global Warming & Climate Change
– An Ornithological Perspective**



Over the past few years, political leaders across the globe have been discounting the science of global warming and climate change as a frivolous issue. But, with the increasing evidence that rising emissions of greenhouse gases is leading to an increase in the earth's surface temperature, the subject matter has gained universal momentum.

Right now, the global politics has rallied round with a startling suddenness so that previously skeptical leaders in Australia, Canada and United States, among others are scrambling to catch up with the firming convictions of their electorates that serious action is urgently needed to tackle this blistering crisis. Martin Parry, co-chairman of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II (the United Nations body), says that there is credible evidence that climate change is having a direct effect on animals, plants and water. "For the first time, we are no longer arm-waving with models; this is empirical data, we can actually measure it," he confesses. The scientific work reviewed by IPCC scientists includes more than 29,000 pieces of data on observed changes in physical and biological aspects of the natural world.

Key findings of the IPCC report include: 20-30% of all plant and animal species at increased risk of extinction if temperatures rise between 1.5 and 2.5 degrees Celsius, and glaciers and snow cover expected to decline, reducing water availability in countries supplied by melt water.

In yet another recent report, the Oxford-based Global Canopy Programme (GCP) - an alliance of leading rainforest scientists, has blamed the accelerating destruction of the rainforests that create a priceless cooling strap around the Earth's equator as one of the primary causes of climate change. The GCP claims that the widespread slashing and burning of tropical forests is second only to the energy sector as a source of greenhouses gases. Carbon emissions from deforestation far surpass the damage wrought by transport, aviation and industry sectors. Statistics from the GCP, summarizing the latest findings from the United Nations, and building on estimates contained in the Stern Report, show deforestation accounts for up to 25 percent of global emissions of heat-trapping gases, while transport and industry sectors account for 14 percent each; and aviation makes up only 3 percent of the total. "Tropical forests are the elephant in the living room of climate change," said Andrew Mitchell, the head of the GCP, in the report, and concludes: "If we lose forests, we lose the fight against climate change."

Similar to many plants and animals, birds' life cycles and behaviour are intimately linked with the changing seasons. For winter migrants, including many warblers and songbirds, changes in weather help signal when they should begin their long flights southward and when to begin their northward journey. Variables such as temperature and precipitation also affect the timing and availability of flowers, seeds, and

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Introduction

Goa is one of the preferred tourist destinations on the global map. Wedged between the Arabian Sea on the west and the Western Ghats on its east, the state commands a unique status on the ecotourism map of the country owing to its rich bird diversity supported by diverse habitats in the form of moist semi evergreen forests, monoculture plantations, sprawling scrubs, extensive plateaus, meandering rivers and fertile flood plains. The first ever report on the bird fauna of this ecologically diverse region was by legendary ornithologist, Salim Ali and his associate in the form of an annotated checklist of 154 species of birds (Grubb and Ali, 1976). Subsequent additions, corrections and compilations (Saha and Mukherjee, 1981; Rane 1984; Saha and Dasgupta, 1992; Lainer 1999 (a & b); Lainer 2004(a & b)) raised the list to a woofing magnitude of 420 species. Most of these works, but for that of Lainer were short duration opportunistic surveys. The work from the authors' laboratory infused a new dimension in these studies in the form of long duration planned surveys on the total ecological perspective including laboratory analysis of abiotic components (Borges, 2002). One of these studies by Borges and Shanbhag (In press) based on their 3 year long planned survey of estuarine wetlands of Mandovi River added 8 more species to the list. The present communication provides information on sighting of 8 more relatively rare species of the region. It is a spin off from a 2 year long ecological work across the natural forest and monoculture plantations in Goa that formed the theme of Ph.D. thesis of the first author (Desai, 2005). The paper highlights the details of the new sightings and microhabitat utility in the background of their hitherto known distribution in the surrounding region.

Yellow-throated Bulbul, *Pycnonotus xantholaemus*;

Four Yellow-throated Bulbuls were seen in an acacia plantation at Gaunem in September 2001; this coincided with initial flowering phase of acacia. During the same period a pair each of the species was recorded in a teak plantation at Kodal and in undergrowth of natural forest at Bhuipal. In the beginning of the subsequent year, 6 individuals of the species in feeding act on aril of acacia were encountered.

Yellow-throated Bulbul, a vulnerable species (Collar et al. 1994) is endemic to southern peninsular India, where it is patchily distributed (Subramanya et al. 1995; Ali and Ripley 1996). It was reported by Kannan in Anaimalai hills once in

Keywords: Birds, Goa, *Pycnonotus xantholaemus*, *Arachnothera magna*, *Lonchura malabarica*, *Parus nuchalis*, *Sylvia hortensis*, *Gampsorhynchus rufulus*, *Turdoides malcolmi*, *Lanius meridionalis*.

Additions to the Avifauna of Goa, India

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1992 (Kannan, 1992) but was not seen in subsequent searches (Kannan, 1998). In 2001 Beisenherz rediscovered it in the same region (Beisenherz, 2004). Recent records of Yellow-throated Bulbul are confined to southern Indian states, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu (Thejaswi, 2004). It was recorded in varied habitats such as thorn scrub, thick jungle, isolated rocky hillock, dry deciduous scrub, degraded dry deciduous forest, thick deciduous forest, moist deciduous vegetation, hill precincts with foothills vegetation, along the foothill road, and roadside bushes in middle and higher elevation (Thejaswi, 2004,). Thejaswi concluded that this species survives in good number in areas relatively away from human habitations and disturbances.

In the present study yellow-throated Bulbul was sighted in lateritic semi evergreen natural forest and also in unmanaged forest plantations. This is the first ever report on its occurrence beyond northwest Karnataka, in Goa. Unlike other congeners the bird seems to prefer semi evergreen or moist deciduous natural or manmade forest with least human disturbance. It was interesting to observe this species feeding on aril of *Acacia auriculiformis*, an introduced plant species.

Southern Grey Shrike, *Lanius meridionalis*

A lone Southern grey shrike was encountered in teak plantation in November 2001. During the same month of the subsequent year two individuals were sighted in cashew plantation amidst the undergrowth of the weed *Chromola odorata*.

The bird could be distinguished from the other two species of shrikes sighted in this region because of the absence of rufous coloration, a glaring feature of difference.

Considering its residential / winter visitor status and already recorded distribution in western India covering Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra (Ali, 1996; Grimmett, 1998) extending southward up to Karnataka (Belgaum), sighting of the species in Goa in November, just prior to the onset of winter is but natural and confirmatory to its winter distribution range.

Large grey Babbler, *Turdoides malcolmi*

During the census in May 2001, five Large grey Babblers were sighted on the edges of the cashew plantation. They could be distinguished from Jungle Babbler owing to larger size, pale grey forehead and longer graduated tail.

The species is known to prefer a habitat intermediate between the choices of common babbler and the jungle babbler falling between extremely dry scrubs and dense woods. Therefore, an encounter of the species during the study, in cashew plantation with moderately woody condition

Table 1 : The details of eight bird species newly sighted in Goa.

Sl. No.	Bird species	Scientific names	NOS	CT	Sites				Zone	Occurrences
					NF	TP	CP	AP		
1	Yellow-throated Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus xantholaemus</i>	4	14	+	+		+	Sc, Ug	Aug, Sep 2001
2	Southern Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	2	3		+	+		Sc, Ug	Nov 2001
3	Large Grey Babbler	<i>Turdoides malcolmi</i>	1	5			+		Ug	May 2001
4	White-hooded Babbler	<i>Gampsorhynchus rufulus</i>	5	25	+				C,Sc	Mar, Apr, May, Jul, Oct 2002
5	Orphean Warbler	<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	5	14		+		+	C	Sep, Oct, 2001; Apr, Sep 2002, Jan 2003
6	Pied Tit	<i>Parus nuchalis</i>	3	8	+				C	July, Oct 2001, Feb 2003
7	Streaked Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera magna</i>	1	1				+	Sc	June 2001
8	White-throated Munia	<i>Lonchura malabarica</i>	1	3		+			Sc	Sept 2001

Note: NOS - No. of sightings; CT – Cumulative total; Sites – NF- Natural forest, TP- Teak plantation, CP- Cashew plantation AP- Acacia plantation; Zone – C-canopy, Sc- subcanopy, Ug- undergrowth.

infested with dense undergrowth of *Chromola odorata* goes well with its preferred habitat. The Large grey Babbler is endemic to the subcontinent (Grimmett et. al. 1998) and was recorded throughout Indian Peninsula with few exceptions (Ali & Ripley, 1989). Its escape from the earlier surveys in Goa might be due to scarce representation of the species in the region owing to the limited availability of preferred habitat due to extensively managed plantations and densely wooded Western Ghats.

White-hooded Babbler, *Gampsorhynchus rufulus*

Bird with white head and underparts, contrasting with rufous-brown upperparts and tail was identified as White-hooded Babbler. Identification was confirmed using standard field guides and it was found that there is no identical match to this species with which it can be mistaken. On the whole 25 individuals of White-hooded Babblers were seen in 5 sightings in natural forest at Bhuipal in month of March, April, May, July and October 2002. They were confined to canopy or sub-canopy and never on ground or in undergrowth. A flock of 7-8 birds was also recorded at Chorao Island during August 2004. They were found gleaning cashew leaves in the mixed vegetation close to human inhabitation.

White-hooded Babbler was recorded in northeast India including Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, Meghalaya and Himalayas (Ali & Ripley, 1989; Ali, 1998 and Grimmett, et. al. 1998). Its earlier record in NE and the present sighting in Goa, lying on SW of India could be either a case of the disjunct distribution (Karanth 2003, 2005) or mere exploratory visits aimed at range extension. Probably its patchy distribution might be responsible for its escape from the earlier surveys. More extensive and intensive surveys in the region may be a necessity to throw light on its distributional status.

Orphean Warbler, *Sylvia hortensis*,

Orphean Warbler, a distant migrant was noticed on 5 occasions in teak and acacia plantations during September

and October 2001; April and September 2002 and January 2003. It was distinguished from Lesser white throat because of its black crown, paler grey mantle and blackish tail.

In view of its reported wintering grounds ranging from Gujarat to Eastern Maharashtra and Southern Karnataka (Grimmett, et. al. 1998) its sighting in Goa during post-monsoon to early winter period is only natural.

Pied Tit, *Parus nuchalis*

Eight individuals of Pied Tit were encountered in 3 sightings during monsoon and winter in natural forest. Its differentiation from Great Tit was much easier due to its black mantle and wing coverts (grey on Great Tit).

This globally threatened resident centered around South central Rajasthan and Gujarat is known to show local movements down south up to southern Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh (Ali, 1996; Grimmett, 1998). Therefore its sighting in Goa is natural being within the known range of local movements; could be an attempt towards extension of the species range.

Streaked Spiderhunter, *Arachnothera magna*

A lone streaked spider hunter with the streaked upperparts and underparts and a long curved bill was sighted in June 2001 on the edge of acacia plantation. Streaked Spiderhunter breeding in northeast India is known to winter in plains (Grimmett, 1998). In this context it is pertinent to note that another congener *Arachnothera longirostra*, Little Spiderhunter with olive-green upperparts, whitish throat and pale yellow underparts, smaller than streaked spider hunter has been sighted by us and other workers in Goa (Lainer, 2004). It was also found breeding in our region (Kunkaliemkar, 2005). This species is known to be patchily distributed in northeastern India and Western Ghats. Therefore, in view of a lone sighting of the species, though it is likely to be a case of sheer vagrancy, there is need for careful scanning of the region for its likely patchy distribution.

White-throated Munia, *Lonchura malabarica*

Three white-throated Munias were encountered in sub-canopy of teak plantation in a single sighting.

White-throated Munia is recorded throughout India (Ali & Ripley, 1989; Ali 1996) except northeast, northwest and Himalayas (Grimmett et. al. 1998). As the bird is known to prefer cultivated areas and scrubs and avoid humid tracts (Ali 1996), its occurrence in teak plantation might be a case of vagrancy.

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Discovery of a new nesting colony of Painted Storks in Ahmednagar district, Maharashtra

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Honorary Wildlife Warden (Govt. of Maharashtra), Riddhisiddhi, Vidya Colony
Opposite HUDCO, Pipeline Road, Ahmednagar – 414 003, Maharashtra
*Niarga Mitra Mandal, Ahmednagar – 414 003, Maharashtra

Most members of *Pelecaniformes* and *Ciconiforms* nest colonially (Ali and Ripley, 1987). The nesting colonies of such birds are popularly known as heronries. The information available on heronries of Maharashtra pertains mainly to a few site specific studies (Naik 1987, Mahabal 1990, Pande 1999, 2006, Purandare 2001 and Kurhade 2004). Thus the studies on the heronries of Maharashtra need to be extended. Subramanya (1996) has also given information on distribution, status and conservation measures of some heronries of Maharashtra.

A new nesting colony of the endangered Painted Stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*) in Ahmednagar district has been recorded for the first time by the authors in April, 2006. The birds have been found nesting on two trees in Baradgaon Sudrik, a small village (Taluka: Karjat, District, Ahmednagar). This village is located about 15 Km SW to Karjat town on Karjat-Siddhatek Road. The village is surrounded by agricultural fields as agriculture is the main occupation of these villagers.

Geographical co-ordinates of Karjat : 18° 33' N, 75° 3' E, Altitude: About 600 meters above mean sea level.

Approach from Ahmednagar : To Karjat 75 Km, then to Rashin 9 Km. Baradgaon Sudrik is 7 Km. from Rashin on Rashin – Siddhatek Road.

Brief details: Our enquiries revealed that the birds have been nesting here since the last four or five years. The birds

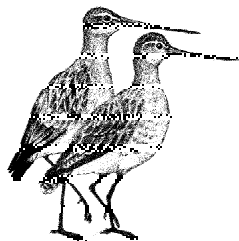
have been nesting on two banyan (*Ficus benghalensis*) trees; one is within the village while the other is on road side. There were 21 nests (10+11) on these two trees, and two to three chicks were found in each nest. As it was very hot in April, the adult painted storks were seen spreading their wings above the chicks to protect them from the Sun. There is a small man made tank about 500 m from the colony with scanty water therein. Adult Painted Storks were seen fetching water from this tank feeding their chicks in a beak to beak fashion. They were also seen showering the chicks with water keep the chicks cool. Two smaller percolation tanks near the village serve as additional source of water and food for the storks.

Due to bird droppings and scattered scraps of fish below the trees, obnoxious smell wafts through the heronry which is very close to the village. Despite this nuisance the villagers are offering protection to the colonies. There has not been a single incidence of poaching of eggs or birds so far. As the birds do not harm the villagers, they enjoy these beautiful birds amidst them.

Though there is no threat to the colony at present, pruning or lopping of some tree branches in future cannot be ruled out. In Maharashtra about 10 heronries have been lost due to various reasons (Subramanya, 1996), and only a small percentage of the existing nesting sites are protected. Baradgaon Sudrik (Taluka: Karjat, District: Ahmednagar) is a new addition to these heronries.

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Some Birds of Kulik Bird Sanctuary North Dinajpur district, West Bengal

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The Kulik Bird Sanctuary is an Important Bird Area of India (Islam & Rahmani 2004), situated 4km north from the Raiganj town in the North Dinajpur district of West Bengal. Officially it was designated as the "Raiganj Wildlife Sanctuary" in the year 1985. The Kulik Bird Sanctuary is known for its highest breeding population of Asian Openbills *Anastomus oscitans*. The breeding heronry of Asian Openbills of Kulik Bird Sanctuary is estimated among top ten heronries of India (Subramanya 1996). The wildlife sanctuary is popularly referred to as Kulik Bird Sanctuary as the river Kulik flows beside the sanctuary and acts as the boundary in its eastern and southern parts (Sharma 2004).

The heronry is actually a mixed breeding colony of various species of water birds mainly Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger*, Indian Shag *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*, Black Crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*, Large Egret *Casmerodius albus*, Median Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia* and Pond Heron *Aedeola grayii*. Along with these a large number of Asian Openbills are breeding here regularly since 1984. This breeding colony is now recognized as the largest Asian Openbill breeding colony in India, where an average of 30,000 to 40,000 individuals breed successfully between July to December each year (Sharma 2001, 2004).

The habitat of the sanctuary is an artificial planted forest of the social forestry program of West Bengal Forest Department, which began in the 1970s. The main tree species of the sanctuary are Kadam *Anthocephalus cadamba*, Jarul *Lagerstroemia flosreginae*, Sisoo *Dalbergia sisoo* and *Eucalyptus* (Sharma 2001, 2004) classified as Tropical Dry Deciduous Forest (Champion and Seth 1968). The area of the sanctuary is c. 1.30 sq km in which the core area is c. 0.14 Sq km and buffer area c. 1.16 Sq km. The shape of the sanctuary is that of the English alphabet "U" with a network of artificial canals connected with the river Kulik. There is also a small island in the core area of

the sanctuary. The island is mainly planted with Eucalyptus trees and is surrounded by artificial canals, which is the main breeding ground for the Asian Openbills. There are 656 nesting trees within the sanctuary area.

In this heronry, water birds, chiefly Asian Openbills start flocking from the month of July on the arrival of monsoon and stay up to January of the following year. In the year 1984 22,364 Asian Openbills were counted. Up to the year 1992 there was a steady rise in the breeding population which became more than twice the initial breeding population. In the year 1993 the breeding population of Asian Openbills was reduced by half, due to heavy rain, storm and flooding of the sanctuary. Such rise and fall of bird population is a common feature of the Kulik Bird Sanctuary (Sridhar 2004). Slowly over the years the breeding population settled between 30,000 and 40,000. Between the periods 2000 and 2006 the population of Asian Openbills rose and stabilized between 40,000 to 50,000. In the year 2006, 40,160 Asian Openbills were counted and in the previous year in 2005 the population was 51,488 individuals. In the year 2006, 1,130 individuals of Asian Openbills were found outside the Kulik Bird Sanctuary and 3,360 individuals were found dead due to rain and storm. It is still not clear as to why such a large number of Asian Openbills are flocking in such a small area of the Kulik Bird Sanctuary. Incidentally, there are lots of anthropogenic activities happening around the sanctuary, which are frequently causing disturbances to the breeding birds. Perhaps, the same batch of birds that hatch and disperse from this sanctuary return year after year and are habituated to the prevailing conditions and the disturbances taking place close to the sanctuary, since their birth.

The sanctuary is very near from the Malda district located c.75 km north of Malda town. I visit this sanctuary quite frequently, particularly during the breeding period of Asian Openbills. Between July and December 2006, I visited the sanctuary twice every month to observe the breeding biology

of Asian Openbills and to record its avifaunal wealth. In all, I have visited this sanctuary some 13 times with an interval of 15 days on an average. I have spent some 60 hours in the sanctuary. During my visits, I have recorded 164 species of birds in the sanctuary. Previously some 71 species of birds were recorded here (Sharma 2004).

List of Birds recorded between the periods of July and December 2006 from the Kulik Bird Sanctuary, North Dinajpur district, West Bengal.

SI No	Common English Name	Scientific Name	Abundance
001.	Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	C
002.	Rain Quail	<i>Coturnix coromandelica</i>	U
003.	Blue-breasted Quail	<i>Coturnix chinensis</i>	U
004.	Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>	C
005.	Lesser Whistling-duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	O
006.	Cotton Pygmy-goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>	C
007.	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	R
008.	Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	O
009.	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	O
010.	Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	C
011.	Rufous Woodpecker	<i>Celeus brachyurus</i>	U
012.	Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos macei</i>	C
013.	Lesser Yellownappe	<i>Picus chlorolophus</i>	R
014.	Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	C
015.	Greater Flameback	<i>Chrysocolaptes lucidus</i>	U
016.	Lineated Barbet	<i>Megalaima lineata</i>	R
017.	Blue-throated Barbet	<i>Megalaima asiatica</i>	C
018.	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>	C
019.	Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>	R
020.	Common Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	C
021.	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	U
022.	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	C
023.	Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon capensis</i>	R
024.	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	C
025.	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	U
026.	Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	C
027.	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>	C
028.	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>	C
029.	Pied Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>	C
030.	Chestnut-winged Cuckoo	<i>Clamator coromandus</i>	U
031.	Common Hawk Cuckoo	<i>Hierococcyx varius</i>	C
032.	Indian Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus micropterus</i>	C
033.	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopacea</i>	C
034.	Sirkeer Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii</i>	R
035.	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	C
036.	Lesser Coucal	<i>Centropus bengalensis</i>	C
037.	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	C
038.	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	C
039.	Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>	C
040.	House Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	C
041.	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	C
042.	Brown Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>	U
043.	Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama</i>	C

044.	Large-tailed Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus macrurus</i>	U
045.	Indian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>	U
046.	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	C
047.	Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>	R
048.	Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	C
049.	Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	C
050.	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	C
051.	Red Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>	U
052.	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	C
053.	Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicoptera</i>	U
054.	Brown Crake	<i>Amaurornis akool</i>	R
055.	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	C
056.	Purple Swampphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	R
057.	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	U
058.	Common Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	R
059.	Pintail Snipe	<i>Gallinago stenura</i>	U
060.	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	C
061.	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	R
062.	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	R
063.	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>	R
064.	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	R
065.	Oriental Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	U
066.	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	R
067.	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	C
068.	Pallas's Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i>	R
069.	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>	R
070.	White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>	U
071.	Indian Vulture	<i>Gyps indicus</i>	U
072.	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	O
073.	Eurasian Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	O
074.	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	C
075.	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	U
076.	Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	C
077.	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	C
078.	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>	C
079.	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	C
080.	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	C
081.	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	R
082.	White-bellied Heron	<i>Ardea insignis</i>	R
083.	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	R
084.	Great Egret	<i>Casmerodius albus</i>	C
085.	Intermediate Egret	<i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>	C
086.	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	C
087.	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	C
088.	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	C
089.	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	C
090.	Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>	R
091.	Golden-fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>	U
092.	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	C
093.	Bay-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius vittatus</i>	C
094.	Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>	C
095.	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	C
096.	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	C
097.	Ashy Woodswallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>	U

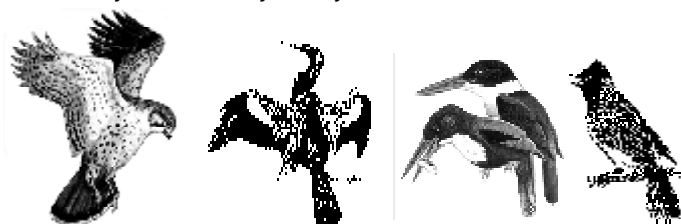
098. Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	C
099. Black-naped Oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>	O
100. Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>	U
101. Large Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>	C
102. Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	C
103. Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	R
104. White-throated Fantail	<i>Rhipidura albicollis</i>	C
105. White-browed Fantail		
Flycatcher	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>	U
106. Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	C
107. Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>	R
108. White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>	U
109. Bronzed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus aeneus</i>	R
110. Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	C
111. Asian Paradise-flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>	C
112. Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>	C
113. Common Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>	C
114. Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	O
115. Orange-headed Thrush	<i>Zoothera citrina</i>	C
116. Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>	C
117. Rusty-tailed Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa ruficauda</i>	R
118. Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula strophilata</i>	R
119. Red-throated Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	C
120. Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>	C
121. Grey-headed Canary		
Flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>	C
122. Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>	O
123. Indian Blue Robin	<i>Luscinia brunnea</i>	U
124. Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	C
125. Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i>	R
126. Plumbeous Water Redstart	<i>Rhyacornis fuliginosus</i>	R
127. Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>	C
128. Chestnut-tailed Starling	<i>Sturnus malabaricus</i>	C
129. Brahminy Starling	<i>Sturnus pagodarum</i>	C
130. Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	C
131. Asian Pied Starling	<i>Sturnus contra</i>	C
132. Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	C
133. Jungle Myna	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>	C
134. Beautiful Nuthatch	<i>Sitta formosa</i>	R
135. Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	C
136. Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>	R
137. Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	C
138. Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	R
139. Red-whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	C
140. Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	C
141. Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	C
142. Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	C
143. Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	C
144. Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	C
145. Dusky Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>	C
146. Smoky Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus fulgiventis</i>	R
147. Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>	C
148. Bengal Bushlark	<i>Mirafra assamica</i>	C
149. Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>	C

150. Purple-rumped Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>	C
151. Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	C
152. Crimson Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga siparaja</i>	C
153. Streaked Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera magna</i>	R
154. House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	C
155. Forest Wagtail	<i>Dendronanthus indicus</i>	C
156. White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	C
157. White-browed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i>	C
158. Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	C
159. Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	C
160. Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>	C
161. Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	U
162. Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>	O
163. Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	C
164. Black-headed Munia	<i>Lonchura Malacca</i>	C

Status : C = Common, U = Uncommon, O = Occasional, R = Rare

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Sowing the seeds of birdwatching and the mystery of a Spotted Owlet's death

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Six or seven years down memory lane, I still remember the incident. I had gone to the office of the Melghat Tiger Reserve (MTR) in Amravati to procure a book, from the MTR's library. The Range Forest Officer (RFO), who was in charge of the library, was giving a copy of Dr. Salim Ali's bird book to a young boy of ten and said "Now go and read this book or I shall take you to task."

The flat-faced boy left the room with the book without uttering a single word. I quickly borrowed another book and hurriedly followed the boy and asked him:

"Do you like birds?"

"Yes" he said.

"Will you like to go out and watch them?"

"Yes" he said excitedly.

I befriended him and promised to take him on birdwatching trips. I noted his phone number and asked him to await my call on Saturday evening. His name was Vicky alias Mukul Gawai, son of the RFO, who was eager to sow the seeds of birdwatching in his son's heart! What a stern method of inculcating love for nature!

When I called him on Saturday evening, he was very excited and asked for permission to bring a friend along. Thus joined Kishor Dudhe, only fourteen then. On Sunday morning we went on my bike for birdwatching to the nearby Pohara Malkhed Reserve Forest. I explained to them in simple language what to observe, how to take notes and how to identify birds. On the following Sunday, we were five; Kunal Ladukar and Pritish Umathe having joined our team. Soon the team grew to more than ten budding birdwatchers. They were Vishal Gawali, Satish Charthal and Kranti Rokde. Now we had to divide into small groups after introduction!

Once Vicky and Kishor brought an injured Spotted Owlet (*Athene brama*) to my home. They had retrieved the owlet from a well in the front yard of Kunal's house, using a bucket. They had applied vermilion paste to the injured wing and tried to feed grains and biscuits to the bird. But it had not accepted them. I told them that it was a 'non-vegetarian' (carnivore). They went back and flushed their houses for mice and caught a number of insects and offered them to the injured owl. But, after a few days of futile efforts to revive the owlet at Kishor's residence, the winged guest breathed its last. When the budding birdwatchers arrived at my residence to break the sad news, there was no need of it for me, for I could read it from their mournful faces!

Later, I prepared a small note with a photograph of Kishor holding the owlet for publication in the local newspapers. In my note, I had underscored the passion of the kids to save the owlet. It was flashed very well in the media. Subsequent to these episodes, the families of these kids started encouraging them. They seldom refused permission to their kids to accompany me on birdwatching trips. Another important information which Vicky's father revealed to me was that his son had never gone out with anybody in his lifetime as he used to vomit, even during short journeys. But the same 'shy and introvert' lad had endured four days' stay in the dense forests of Melghat Tiger Reserve with me, during our tiger census and had traveled hundreds of kilometers, without exhibiting the slightest discomfort!

By then, we had established a good network with ten avid boys providing instant news about the birds in the area. I suddenly felt as if I had acquired ten new pairs of eyes. The keen sense of observation of the boys helped me a lot in enriching my own information, facts and knowledge about the birds. Along with these ardent bird enthusiasts I chanced upon the nesting of Blue-tailed Bee-eaters (*Merops philippinus*) (colony), Greater Painted-snipe (*Rostratula benghalensis*), White-breasted Waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*), Spotted Owlet (*Athene brama*), Jungle Babbler (*Turdoides striatus*), Rufous-backed Shrike (*Lanius schach*), Plain Prinia (*Prinia inornata*), Jungle Bush Quail (*Perdica asiatica*), Common Coot (*Fulica atra*), Red-wattled (*Vanellus indicus*) and Yellow-wattled Lapwings (*V. malabaricus*), Red-necked Falcon (*Falco chicquera*) and many other species. The observations on a pair of Spotted Owlets that indulged in transvestism or trans-sexualism would not have been chronicled, but for the keen observations of these youngsters. These observations resulted in the triumphant publication of a few articles, in the *Newsletter for Birdwatchers*. In due course, I took the initiative to form a registered organization with the help of comrades from other fields also, viz., Dr. Prabha Bhogaonkar (Botanist and Ph. D. guide), Mr. Raghavendra Nande (Snake rescuer), Mr. Kedar Pawgi (Mountaineer) and others including Mr. Jayant Wadatar (fellow birder, now working on butterflies of the Satpudas for his Doctoral thesis). The organization was registered as 'Wildlife and Environment Conservation Society, Amravati'.

In August 2005, I was transferred to Nagpur much to the disappointment of my young birder friends. Even though I was in no mood to leave Amravati, I had no choice but to proceed to Nagpur. Nevertheless, the boys kept telephoning

me, which was emotionally challenging. I was frequently besieged with nostalgic memories of our birding trips in Amravati. Now whenever the boys spot a new bird, they so vividly describe it to me, that I can identify the bird over the telephone itself! I am happy that presently Mr. Kranti Rokde, and Satish Charthal have procured Grimmet's Guide and Pictorial Guide respectively. Kishor is now a 2nd year B. Sc., student and has opted for Environmental Science as his chosen field against the wishes of his father, who wanted him to go for a degree in Computers! Kishor and Vishal are working as volunteers in the Kids for Tigers programme and spreading the message of conservation among the children.

It is now two years since I am posted out of Amravati, but invariably on every Sunday someone from my group is out into the wilderness with binoculars hanging proudly around his neck. A phone call in the evening on most Sundays about what was sighted on that day, gives me immense satisfaction and delight. The seeds of birdwatching that I have sown in the hearts of these youngsters, are gradually growing and helping them to be independent ornithologists!

Diet of Spotted Owlets and the mystery surrounding the death of one:

We collected the pellets of a pair of Spotted Owlets in Rohidas Colony in a semi-urban environment. The Peepal (*Ficus religiosa*) tree where they roost is at the end of the colony. From here cultivation starts and continues to the Chhatra Range of reserve forests. Mr. Jayant Wadatar and myself analyzed the pellets (n=51) in the laboratory of the Department of Zoology, Amravati University, Amravati. We found nine bills of small birds including one each of House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Indian Silverbill (*Lonchura malabarica*), Ashy Prinia (*Prinia socialis*), hatchling of domestic hen (*Gallus spp.?*) and three more bills of small birds, which could not be identified by us. Other evidences, which were used in confirming the identity of prey bird species, are feathers and hollow bones of birds in the pellets.

One small rodent (*Rattus sp.*) was also identified in the pellets from the skin pieces, skull and teeth. Leaves of Eucalyptus were seen in separate pellets, which consisted entirely of leaf remains. I think that the birds might be consuming the leaves occasionally to cleanse the digestive system of some ailments, considering the medical benefits of Eucalyptus oil. Other items identified in pellets were grains of Jowar, Wheat, seeds of Grass (Poaceae). Probably they found the way into the pellets alongwith the bellies of granivorous birds which the owlets had consumed. Insect parts were also found, but they could not be identified at our level. Though the Spotted Owllet's diet is known to include small birds (Ali and Ripley 2001) plant rootlets (Jain & Advani 1983) and Eucalyptus seeds (Pande et. al. 2004) details of bird species and Eucalyptus leaves were not reported. Nor the presence of grains in the pellets has been reported.

We have noted that the House Sparrows generally do not create a ruckus about the presence of Spotted Owllets,

except when they have chicks in the nest. On 3rd March 2004, a Black Drongo was seen mobbing a Spotted Owllet. On 8th March 2004 a Spotted Owllet dived at a Five-striped Squirrel, but the latter escaped. Otherwise the squirrels boldly moved around the owllets perched on the tree, sometimes approaching within a meter of them. On 28th March 2005, a Common Tailorbird (*Orthotomus sutorius*) and a Chestnut-shouldered Petronia (*Petronia xanthocollis*) created much commotion near a Spotted Owllet. On the evening of 14th May 2004, we observed a Long-tailed Shrike (*Lanius schach*), a Red-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*) and an Indian Robin (*Saxicoloides fulicata*) collectively mobbing a pair of owllets. On 28th May 2004, a Spotted Owllet was seen lunging at an adult Coppersmith Barbet (*Megalaima haemacephala*) but the latter escaped.

On yet another occasion, we observed one of the owllets emerging from a well in the evening, in which the House Sparrows were nesting. This observation also solved a mystery (after six years?) as to why an agile Spotted Owllet had fallen into the well in the front yard of Kunal's house as mentioned in the beginning of this article. The well also had nests of House Sparrows and the owllet might have tried to dive into a nest of the sparrows, in pitch darkness, probably for catching a nestling or for seizing a brooding Sparrow. The owllet might have injured its wing in the process, as it could not notice the thin wires in the well!

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CORRESPONDENCE

NIDIFICATION AND SITE FIDELITY OF THE PHEASANT TAILED JACANA (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*) IN SUPATAL POND OF JABALPUR (MADHYA PRADESH), SATISH SHUKLA, Central Poultry Diagnostic Laboratory, 1333/1, Narmda Road, Jabalpur 482 001. e-mail : schand24@yahoo.co.uk

Pheasant tailed Jacana (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus* Scopoli) is a common resident waterfowl of India. It is identified by its large amount of white and chocolate brown plumage and pointed downward tail. It is a gregarious breeding bird, distinguished by its sickle-shaped tail (Ali, 1996).

Once upon a time there were many ponds in and around Jabalpur. Now, only five exist. Among them, Supatal pond is luxuriantly vegetated by weed grasses, and also Trapa cultivated by the farmers. Pond is protected from all sides by wire fencing. This pond is a favourable habitat for the waterfowl. Many migratory birds come every year to this pond in winter for food and shelter. Besides, some resident species inhabit for the whole year and also breed.

Pheasant tailed Jacana usually nests in Supatal pond, between June and August. This observation was recorded for three years (2003 – 2005). Twenty-two nests were observed on the surface of the leaves of Trapa and water hyacinth. Nests on the leaves of Trapa were usually observed on the east side of the Supatal pond. The nest was made of a skimpy pad of twisted weed stems of floating leaves of Trapa and of rushes present nearby. Each nest contained 3-4 green to bronze coloured eggs.

Between July and September 2004, fifteen nests were seen, mainly on the east side of pond. These were located in the submerged straw of hyacinth weed. The mating of Jacana was always seen during feeding and or swimming quietly near the nest. The next time I visited the pond was on 18th of June, 2005 and looked for the nests. I found that breeding birds were wandering around the nests. The incubating bird frequently jerked its tail while it sat on the eggs inside the nest.

It seems that there is strong site fidelity for this bird. This is based on the present observation that the bird kept coming to Supatal pond regularly for three years, that is, the period of observation. Moreover, Jacana appears to have a particular breeding season from June to September. These observations were based on a study carried out between 2003 to 2005 and are in agreement with those of Ali (1996)

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SELECTIVE MEDICATION BY TWO BIRDS. H. DANIEL WESLEY, 2/126, 4th Street, Ramalinga Nagar South, Tiruchirappalli – 620 017

“Medicine is not food; but food is medicine” is a familiar cliché. Birds seem to have the natural instinct to consume selectively the right food at the right time and season.

The Rose-ringed Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) is purely a herbivore, taking fruits and nuts, grains and buds etc (Ali & Ripley, 1987; Wesley, 1993). A pair of birds visit my *Terminalia* sp., to nibble at the fleshy part of the fruits, cutting them off the stalks and holding them in the left foot. The hard nuts are discarded to the ground. I observed since 5 March through April-May 2000 and during the same months in 2006, many birds, 5-10 at a time, descend on the low herbs of *Chrozophora rottleri koltzsch* of *Euphorbiaceae* family that had appeared in the neighborhood after the soil had been turned over for the construction of an overhead tank. Checking the ground under the herbs, the birds leaving, I found that the birds had nibbled off the green tricarpellary fruits and removing the rind, consumed the kernel; the rinds lay strewn on the ground. This was a daily event during the period of observation.

The leaf is said to be depurative; the seeds cathartic; the root to relieve cough. A concoction of the leaf and branches with the flower buds of another plant species, taken orally, cures dermatitis. With rich moisture content and the other features, the fruits must give relief to the birds in quite a few ways from gut parasites, digestive diseases, skin problems associated with moulting and thirst (CSIR, 1992).

On 26 August 1998 I observed a common Mynah (*Acridotheres tristis*) pluck a few neem leaflets (*Azadiracta indica*) from the bases of a few leaves, whack and swallow them, base first. The consumption of the leaflets must suggest the presence of something that the fruit does not contain. Or, perhaps, now that the fruits were almost exhausted, the mature basal leaflets were taken for some therapeutic constituents that are characteristic of the ripe fruits.

Acknowledgement

My thanks are due to the Department of Botany, Bishop Heber College for identifying the plant and giving access to other relevant books.

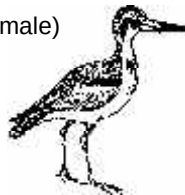
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NAMES OF BIRDS IN PARDHI DIALECT OF MAHARASHTRA. RAJU KASAMBE, G-1, Laxmi Apartments, 64, Vidya Vihar Colony, Pratap Nagar, Nagpur-440022, Maharashtra E-mail: kasambe.raju@gmail.com

I collected names of birds in Pardhi dialect from many 'knowledgeable' Pardhis, quite a few of them being 'shikaris' (hunters). The names were collected by showing the pictures from Grimm et. al.'s Pocket Guide (2000) from several Pardhis staying at various 'bedas' in Amravati, Yavatmal, Akola, Washim, Wardha and Nagpur districts of Maharashtra. The names were then compared and compiled. Only those names, which are corroborated by two Pardhis from distant 'bedas' and matched, were taken as acceptable. But most of the time the names seem to be same among all the Pardhis, no matter where you are. That may mean that the knowledge has passed on through generations and it is not superficial. Pardhis know the minute details of the bird morphology like 'three-toes' of bustard quails or yellow-bill of the Yellow-legged Button Quail. They also have excellent knowledge of the calls made by the birds hunted by them in general and they have the proficiency of mimicking the calls of quails and many bird species. They mimic the calls of the quails to attract the birds to their traps. Many names show resemblance to Gujrathi and Hindi dialects e.g., 'Turumti' for Red-necked Falcon (Ali, 1996) and some show affinity to Marathi language (e.g., 'Kolsa' meaning 'coal' for Black Drongo). These affinities may help the anthropologists in tracing the roots and ancestry of this tribal lot. Their surnames like Pawar, Rathod, Chauhan resemble those of Rajputs with Marathi lineage. Their dialect looks to be a combination of Gujrathi, Rajasthani and Marathi. I have provided the names of the senior Pardhis interviewed for this purpose in a previous article (Kasambe, 2005) published in the Newsletter for Birdwatchers.

1. Cormorants (all): Chandok, Telmoorag
2. Egrets (General): Bangla
3. Waterfowl: Badak
4. Demoiselle Crane: Taatri
5. Storks (General): Dhok, Karku
6. Great Indian Bustard: Doonad
7. Eagles: Shaayan
8. Harriers: Titmaar
9. Common Pariah Kite: Sambhali
10. Scavenger Vulture: Linda
11. Whitebacked Vulture: Garad
12. King Vulture: Raattal
13. Longbilled Vulture: Paandhrao, Dholiyo
14. Cinerous Vulture: Bhangar
15. Griffon Vulture: Gulchhadi
16. Red Junglefowl: Kukda (male), Kukdi (female)
17. Red-wattled Lapwing: Titwadi (call)
18. Yellow-wattled Lapwing: Tehrki (call)
19. Indian Courser: Gedroo
20. Great Stone Plover: Badkhya
21. Black-winged Stilt: Chankha



22. River Tern: Zaar
23. Sandgrouse (All): Bhadtittar (call)
24. Indian Sandgrouse: Batta
25. Painted Sandgrouse: Kachariya
26. Green Pigeon: Hariyaali
27. Ring Dove: Deochodri, Ghol
28. Oriental Turtle Dove: Chitroung
29. Spotted Dove: Kathodi, Kadudi
30. Red-collared Dove: Pankheri
31. Blue Rock Pigeon: Pareva
32. Lesser Florican: Khalchida (male), Bhandewadi (female)
33. Alexandrine Parakeet: Karan, Motho Mithoo (large parrot)
34. Roseringed Parakeet: Mandvo Mithoo (median parrot), Mithoo
35. Blossom-headed Parakeet: Nano Mithoo (small parrot), Tooi (call)
36. Coppersmith Barbet: Kokkok (call)
37. Common Hawk Cuckoo: Kobal
38. Great Horned Owl: Ghooghoo (call)
39. Barn Owl: Chakwi-chaandwa
40. Spotted Owlet: Matmatya (Staring habit)
41. Nightjars (all): Chhiblak, Khuskal, Jafari
42. Kingfishers (all): Kilila (call)
43. Pied Crested Cuckoo: Chotiwal (crested), Pipioo (call)
44. Hoopoe: Kalchikdo, Khatikdo
45. Woodpeckers (all): Khodphodya (wood-breaker)
46. Red-vented Bulbul: Patlook (call), Lalgandya (red-vented)
47. Black Drongo: Kolsa or Kolshyo (coal)
48. Shrikes (all): Katora (call)
49. Grey Shrike: Doodh-katora (call)
50. Pond Heron: Khondya (Lazy), Matalli Khaani (soil eater)
51. Grey Heron: Chir Bangla
52. Grey Partridge: Goretro (fair partridge)
53. Painted Partridge: Kaletro (black partridge)
54. Common Peafowl: Dighada, Parana, Songyo Mor (Peafowl with costume, all for male), Dighadi (female)
55. Greater Coucal: Kumbhar Kanglao (Potter crow)
56. Indian Grey Hornbill: Tinchocha (three-billed), Dhanchidi (wealth bringer)
57. Babblers (all): Googaya (call)
58. Black Ibis: Kaali (black)
59. Munia: Munya
60. Common Quail: Ghagar Bati
61. Rain Quail: Bater (quail)
62. Rock bush Quail: Kaalu Lavlu (Black Quail)
63. Jungle Bush Quail: Gerji Bati
64. Bustard Quails (all): Teeboti (three-toed)
65. Yellow-legged Button Quail: Piluchochu (yellow-billed)
66. Small Button Quail: Gavtam-rusi (hides in grass)
67. Barred Button Quail: Kaali-chhati (black-breasted)
68. Swallows (all): Kaankatri (ear-cutter)
69. Grey Tit: Kankeri
70. Wagtails (all): Dhoban (washer woman)
71. White Eye: Pit-pati (call)



72. House Crow: Kaanglo
73. Jungle Crow: Kaangan
74. Magpie Robin: Kaalo Kolchha
75. Indian Robin: Jevat Hoti (call)
76. Bramhiny Myna: Kaani Kebar
77. Common Myna: Kebar, Kanhyalu
78. Hill Myna: Bangali Kebar
79. Common Hawk Cuckoo: Kobal
80. Rosy Pastor: Bholdu
81. Indian Roller: Daas (from call)
82. Paradise Flycatcher: Looli (loose tail)
83. Sunbird: Deo-chimni (sparrow)
84. Little Ringed Plover: Toolhu (tiny one)
85. Shikra: Shikra
86. Rednecked Falcon: Turumti (Gujrathi name)
87. Fantail Flycatcher: Chunchunya (smart kid)
88. Black-shouldered Kite: Titmaar
89. White-necked Stork: Machhariya Dhok (fish eating stork)
90. Laggar Falcon: Laggad
91. Osprey: Raul



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SIGHTING OF PALLAS'S FISH EAGLE (*HALIAEETUS LEUCORYPHUS*) IN CHHATTISGARH, A.M.K. BHAROS, B. 101, Gayatrinagar, PO, Shankernagar, Raipur, CG. 492 007.

The Pallas's fish Eagle is reported from neighborhood of large rivers, inland lakes and is distributed in north peninsular and south to line roughly from Surat (21° to 10°N) to the south of Chilka lake in Orissa. (Hand Book of Birds of India & Pakistan, Ali & Ripley, Vol – 6, P 414 and Birds of the Indian Subcontinent, Grimmett & Inskipp, P – 696)

However the species has recently been sighted at three different locations in Raipur Dist. of the state, as below.

- **Kurud Reservoir** - 19 Km East of Raipur, on 18 Oct. 2005, feeding on something on the reservoir margin and was watched closely.
- **Tauranga Reservoir** - 70 Km South East of Raipur. A bird arrived and perched on a small leafless tree not far from the reservoir, thereafter it flew back in the direction it had arrived. Observed the bird at perch and in flight.
- **Sondur Dam** - 150 Km South of Raipur. On 15 May 2006, bird observed while on perch and in flight.

In all the three instances the birds offered sufficient time for observation leading to its confirmed identification. These sightings thus suggest its occurrence in this region as well.

A NEST ON TERRACE. BHARGAV A.P., # 1147, 'Dhriti', 43rd Cross, Kumaraswamy Layout, Bangalore – 560 078. e-mail : bhargavap_84@rediffmail.com

On top of our house we have two rooms and an open space for washing and drying cloths. In that open space we have kept many potted plants. Ashy Prinias (*Prinia socialis*) and Tailor birds (*Orthotomus sutorius*) frequently visit our mini garden in search of insects.

On a Sunday morning as I was busy with some domestic work, I heard the call of an Ashy Prinia from the open space. Curiously I peeped through the window and saw the prinia trying to pull a thread from an old cloth. I could at once deduce that the bird was trying to use the threads for stitching its nest. I continued to watch the bird till it successfully pulled out a thread from the cloth. From there it flew to one of the ornamental palm plants which was placed right opposite to the window from which I was watching (the bird was unable to notice me as the window was closed). It did some thing there and flew away.

My suspicions were not un-confounded. The prinia was building a nest in the ornamental palm plant. It took almost a week to complete the nest and it was placed around three feet above the ground. On the morning of 19-7-2005 (Tuesday) I saw two reddish brown eggs in the nest and during the next two days two more eggs were added. On the morning of 1-8-2005 (Monday) I was delighted to notice that one of them had hatched. The chick with its eyes closed was shaking its featherless wings indicating that it was alive. On the same evening two more eggs hatched. But the last egg remained un-hatched.

A week later the eyes of the chicks were fully developed and they were now able to see. Both the parents were sharing their duty of feeding the chicks. Initially the parents used to bring small prey like house flies. Later on as chicks grew, the size of prey increased i.e. the parents were bringing much larger prey like caterpillars.

On 12-8-2005 (Friday) I noticed that the chicks were fully grown. On the next morning as usual I went to watch the activities from my room, but there were no movements in the nest. I waited patiently for some time but none of the parents came with food. I went outside to take a closer look but saw the empty nest with the solitary un-hatched egg. Soon I heard the calls of the parents and I looked around carefully. There it was, a chick was sitting on a branch of another plant. As the call became louder I returned to my room. I called all my family members and we were overjoyed to watch the parent prinia teaching the first flying lessons to its chicks. After the flying lessons, the chicks were escorted by their parents into the open area around our house.

Again in June 2006, I saw an Ashy Prinia busily building a nest in the same plant. After about ten days the nest was ready for occupation. This time also four eggs were laid and they all hatched. But, after four days I saw one of the chicks lying dead. I presumed that it might have died because the parents were unable to feed four ever hungry chicks or that the other chicks might have obstructed the unlucky chick from getting its due share of food. The rest of them survived and fifteen days after hatching, the chicks were led to the open ground by their parents.

REDVENTED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus cafer*) FEEDING ON HOUSE GECKO (*Hemidactylus flaviridis*) HATCHLING,
A.M.K. BHAROS, B. 101, Gayatrinagar, PO, Shankernagar, Raipur, CG. 492 007

The Red vented Bulbul a common species feeds on a variety of flower nectar, berries and insects, which are captured by performing vertical aerial sallies.

In the evening hours on 30th May 2006, a bird arrived and perched about three meters away from me, holding the hatchling of a House Gecko in its bill. This prey was placed on the parapet wall and struck several times, then held in beak and maneuvered to feed the prey, head first. In the process the hatchling was swallowed and only a portion of its tail was visible. Because of the disturbance caused by other birds around, the Bulbul flew in this state having almost swallowed its prey.

The above observation suggests that the species also feed on the Gecko apart from other diet as mentioned above.

FIRST RECORD OF BREEDING OF KENTISH PLOVER (*Charadrius alexandrinus seebohmii*) FROM VIDARBHA, MAHARASHTRA. RAJU KASAMBE, G-1, Laxmi Apartments, 64, Vidya Vihar Colony, Pratap Nagar, Nagpur-440022, Maharashtra. E-mail: kasambe.raju@gmail.com

On 21st May 2003 a nest of Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* (race *seebohmii*) was located on bare ground to the backside of Upper Wardha dam east of Morshi town in Amravati district of Maharashtra. The pair was incubating the three eggs. The eggs were sandy brown with a greenish tinge and were blotched with black spots. The eggs camouflaged very well in the dry black soil there. The birds gave distraction display when I approached the nest. Also when I was searching for the nest the birds ran to the water, dipped the belly in it and then applied the water to the eggs. That was to maintain the temperature of the eggs. I retreated as soon as I had taken photos.

Also on this day I saw around 50 Small Pratincoles *Glareola lactea*, 2 nests of Red-wattled Lapwings, 2 nests of Little Ringed Plovers *Charadrius dubius* and one chick of Indian Courser *Cursorius coromandelicus* running with two adults. I visited the same spot again on 8th June 2003 and found 2 nests of Kentish Plovers out of which one with a single egg was new.

Dates and locations of sightings of *Charadrius alexandrinus seebohmii* in Vidarbha as follows:

12th February 2006: Vena Reservoir (in Nagpur district): 7 birds. (The geographical location of Vena reservoir is 21°16' N and 78°86' E.)

18th May 2006: Vena: 3 birds

4th June, 2006 15-16 birds at Vena.

There are two races of Kentish Plovers in India. According to Grimmett et. al. (2000) *Charadrius a. alexandrinus* is a widespread winter visitor throughout India. It has white hind

collar and usually small, well-defined patches on sides of breast. Male has rufous cap and black eye-stripe and forecrown. But the male of *Charadrius a. seebohmii* lacks these features and often has whitish lores.

According to the Ripley Guide (2005) "In South India (limits unknown) and Sri Lanka, *seebohmii* has brownish crown and lacks black forehead-band and loreal stripe". And about the distribution it says, "the Northern limits of *seebohmii* in India (are) unknown". According to Grimmett et. al. (2000) "Kentish Plover breeds locally in Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka" But the maps in the book shows only 6 isolated or occasional breeding records from India (out of which the only record from south is shown from Tamil Nadu). And it is shown as a winter migrant throughout most of India.

Regular sightings of *seebohmii* race in Vidarbha during the nesting season and the evidence of actual nesting establish two things about its status here. We can take the above reports as the range extension (as the northernmost limit) and consider the birds as either residents or summer breeding migrants here.

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BIRDING AT NAGUVANAHALLI, NEAR SRIRANGAPATNA, MYSORE, P. MANJUNATH*, S. NITIN AND VINAY. K, *No 173, 4th Cross, 4th Main, NGEF Layout, RMV II Stage, Bangalore 560 094. E-mail: manjunathbhounsley@yahoo.com

We went on a birding trip to Naguvanahalli near Srirangapatna and Thailur Lake (Maddur) on 14th May 2006. Naguvanahalli is a popular nesting ground for a large number of Blue-tailed Bee-eaters (*Merops philippinus*). We left Bangalore at 4.30am and reached the banks of the river Cauvery at Naguvanahalli by 7.30 am. Our main endeavor was to study the Blue tailed Bee-eaters at nest. Mr. Vinay had made a couple of trips earlier, but for the rest of us this was our first trip to the breeding colony of bee-eaters at Naguvanahalli. The main river branches out at Naguvanahalli as Chanagal Hole and rejoins the main stream further down. A bund is formed between the main river and the stream. The bee-eaters had excavated their nesting tunnels on the earthen bund and we could count some 70 to 80 active nests.

By the time we reached the spot, the bee-eaters were actively soaring up and about. The vivid green plumage of the bee-eaters and their bright blue tail with projecting pin-feathers were helpful in recognizing them as blue-tailed bee-eaters. They are slightly larger than the common small green bee-eaters; the male and female genders of this family wearing similar plumage. Bee-eaters are also recognizable by the way they collect their breakfast. Their typical hunting methods were noteworthy. We formally began our birdwatching and photographing by 8.00 am. Our first bee-eater was smugly perched on a twig, and glancing on all sides, as if admiring the

landscape. It detected a dragonfly some 100 feet away, where no human eye could reach and took to air in a jiffy. In mid-air it clicked its pointed beak over the winged insect, fluttered for a moment, cartwheeled and sallied back to its perch. In next to no time, it battered the dragonfly on the perch and took it to the nest to feed its chicks. The bee-eaters at the nesting colony were maintaining contact with each other, with their pleasant unmistakable jingling *tree-tree-tree* and *teerp-teerp-teerp* calls, all day long.

Later as we were having our breakfast in a coconut grove near Paschimavahini, on the banks of the river Cauvery, a sudden outburst of a spirited warbled song of an Ashy Prinia (*Prinia socialis*) engaged our attention as the singer opened its musical session. We could clearly enjoy the ecstatic song of this warbler in an otherwise silent countryside, as the reverberating composition reached its crescendo and ceased as suddenly as it had started.

Soon, the resounding penetrating calls of an accented voice from the interiors of sodden vegetation gained our attention. It was the voice of the White-breasted Waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*); once heard it is never forgotten. Even if one has never seen this shy and introvert White-breasted Waterhen which relies on its protective coloring as it skulks among the wetland vegetation, one can always be sure of remembering at least this bird by its voice alone. It is a rough raucous coarse rasping *crocks krr-kwaak, krr-kwaak-kwaak* rolling song. Perhaps it was the beginning of their nesting season here at Naguvinahalli, and the waterhens were rather nosier with their cacophony that echoed widely. As soon as one waterhen stopped its rasping calls, it was taken up and repeated by another member of the community and the boisterous commotion went on till each and every waterhen of the area had a chance to exhibit its vocal repertoire from its hideout.

Sprawling sugarcane and paddy fields on either side of the river, with expansive sandbars contributed to the rustic splendor of Nuguvunahalli. It was an amusing sight to watch flocks of Baya Weavers (*Ploceus philippinus*) heralding the onset of monsoon with their typical long drawn wheezy whistles. These dexterous weavers had taken advantage of the profusion of paddy crop to build their hanging nests on thorny trees, high tension wires and other inaccessible locations.

An occasional pitiful *did-he-do-it...did-he-do-it* alarm calls of a panic stricken Red-wattled Lapwing (*Vanellus indicus*) from an auxiliary sandbar, was wafting across the placid river. The lapwing was apparently on guard duty trying to mislead potential predators away from the nest and updating its mate about the movements of the predator on the sandbar.

Birders visit this area mainly for watching and photographing blue tailed bee-eaters. The bee-eaters nest in the open and there is not much shade for the birders or photographers. The nesting colony is adjacent to a burial ground and consequently free from human disturbances, other than routine agricultural operations. The afternoon was oppressively hot and we had to call it a day, but not before recording some 46 species of birds listed below in alphabetical order:-

Ashy Prinia (*Prinia socialis*)

Asian Koel (*Eudynamys scolopacea*)

Asian Openbill Stork (*Anastomus oscitans*)

Asian Palm Swift (*Cypsiurus balasiensis*)

Baya Weaver (*Ploceus philippinus*)

Black Ibis (*Pseudibis papillosa*)

Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*)

Black-headed Ibis (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*)

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*)

Blue Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

Blue-tailed Bee-eater (*Merops philippinus*) about 200+

Brahminy Kite (*Haliastur indus*)

Bronze-winged Jacana (*Metopidius indicus*)

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)

Common Coot (*Fulica atra*)

Common Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)

Common Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Cotton Pygmy-goose (*Nettapus coromandelianus*)

Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Grey Francolin (*Francolinus pondicerianus*)

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)

Indian Grey Hornbill (*Ocyrocus birostris*)

Indian Pond Heron (*Ardeola grayii*)

Jungle Crow (*Corvus macrorhynchos*)

Large Egret (*Casmerodius albus*)

Large Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla maderaspatensis*)

Lesser Coucal (*Centropus bengalensis*)

Little Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax niger*)

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Median Egret (*Mesophoyx intermedia*)

Paddyfield Pipit (*Anthus rufulus*)

Painted Stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*)

Red-wattled Lapwing (*Vanellus indicus*)

Red-whiskered Bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus*)

River Tern (*Sterna aurantia*)

Rose-ringed Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*)

Small Blue Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Spot-billed Duck (*Anas poecilorhyncha*)

Spot-billed Pelican (*Pelecanus philippensis*)

Spotted Dove (*Streptopelia chinensis*)

White-breasted Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*)

White-breasted Waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*)

White-cheeked Barbet (*Megalaima viridis*)



Cover: Indian Grey Hornbill (*Ocyrocus birostris*) feeding on the figs of Chilkhan (*Ficus microcarpa*) at the Bankapura Peacock Sanctuary, near Haveri, Karnataka. This hornbill has a peculiar pointed casque surmounted on the beak. Seen in fairly well-wooded areas with ficus and other fruiting trees. Makes a variety of loud cackling and squealing calls. Food includes berries, figs, beetles, lizards and an occasional scorpion. Photos: S. Shreyas.

continued from page 18...

other food sources at their chosen destinations. Researchers are apprehensive that, birds that rely on very specific habitats for at least part of their life cycle, such as the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler in Texas, could become extinct if their habitat disappears. For these compelling reasons, several bird species are considered to be exceedingly susceptible to global warming and concomitant climate change.

Studies in North America have indicated that Global warming is already affecting some bird species and that the ranges of a number of bird species have been perceptibly shifting, consistent with the 20th Century trend of rising average temperatures. Seven of the North American warbler species have shifted their range significantly farther north in the past 24 years, by an average of more than 65 miles. Seabirds, such as the Sooty Shearwater, have shifted their migration route toward cooler northwestern areas of the Pacific in response to rising sea temperatures off the coastline of California. There are also tangible signs that recent climate trends are affecting birds' behaviour. Studies in the United States and Europe have found that some songbirds are migrating earlier in Spring months, corresponding with warmer temperatures. Twenty species of migratory birds in North America shows that the arrival dates were up to 21 days earlier in 1994 than in 1965, while just a few species were arriving later.

Because this shift is occurring throughout the species' broad habitat range, scientists believe that the birds are responding to larger trends than just localized climate variations. These changes may be occurring regardless of whether the birds' arrival is synchronized with the availability of food sources such as insects, flowers, and berries at their migratory destinations. Global warming may cause migration and nesting to get out of step with food supplies. As a result, the "early birds" may not get the worm.

Scientists at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory in Colorado have discovered that American Robins migrating to the region are turning up an average of two weeks earlier than they did 23 years ago. They attribute this shift to the likelihood that the birds are responding to warmer temperatures at the lower altitudes that typify their wintering grounds. The problem is, they are arriving at their higher-altitude summer breeding grounds only to find that there are still winter conditions there. There is now a 65-day gap between the date of the first robin sighting and the first date of bare ground at the snow measuring station, 18 days longer than in 1981. As a result, the birds must wait longer for the snow to melt before they can feed and may be at a greater risk of starvation.

Scientists are also debating that under two scenarios of global climate change, there will be major shifts in the ranges and abundances of many of the 150 common bird species in the Eastern United States over the next 100 years or so; 50-52% of species will decrease in abundance by 25% or more, while 37-40% of species will exhibit range reductions of 25% or more.

Long-distance migrants may be more vulnerable to global warming than other species. As winter temperatures

increased between 1980 and 1992 at Lake Constance in Central Europe, the proportion of long-distance migrant bird species decreased while the number and proportion of residents and short-distance migrants increased. In North America, many songbirds are long-distance migrants. Species such as Baltimore Oriole, Barn Swallow, Wood Thrush, and Scarlet Tanager could well be driven from the places where birders expect to find them, more ominously, from the traditional habitats to which they are best suited. Another study has revealed that the 90% decline in Sooty Shearwaters off the California coast in just seven years (1987 -1994) has been associated with warming of the California Current, which flows from southern British Columbia to Baja California. Elizabeth Lucy, an avid birder of Michigan kept the arrival data of birds for 30 years. Now the data reveals that of the 40 species documented by her, Sandhill Crane, Great Tit and 14 other species are arriving three weeks ahead of time.

Some experts believe that global warming and associated drought in the Prairie Potholes region (southeastern Alberta and northeastern Montana to southern Manitoba and western Minnesota) will lead to significant reductions in the populations of 14 species of migratory waterfowl; 30-50% fewer prairie ponds will hold water in spring by 2060, with an associated 40-50% decline in the numbers of ducks settling to breed. The ranges of many European and African birds are likely to shift by at least 600 miles, with a decline in species richness and reduction in average range sizes (based on simulations made for the impacts of a variety of late 21st century climate models on European and African birds).

In India for instance, extra melting in the Himalayas and consequential flooding of plains; excessive sea water incursion into Sunderbans, Point Calimere, Pulicat Lake; reduced rainfall in Rann of Kachch, and increased evaporation at Bharatpur Sanctuary may bring untold misery to a number of bird species.

Along these lines, many knowledgeable birders have contributed significantly to the population and migratory trends by keeping regular notes on birds visiting their areas. Incidentally, way back in 1993 itself, the question of climate change had been addressed and anticipatory measures for waterfowl conservation and sustainable development had been suggested by us at the First National Seminar on Changing Scenario of Bird Ecology and Conservation, Bangalore. Later on in 2005, at the Second National Seminar on Bird Ecology and Conservation, held at Bangalore, the progress of the NLBW-enabled studies was reviewed. The seminar also briefly focused on the modes of creating adequate awareness on global warming and bird conservation issues.

The time for action is now. We cannot afford to remain nonchalant or cold shouldered to the crisis of global warming. Countless species of birds are on the brink of wandering off the tracks and soaring into oblivion. Therefore, with a compelling sense of urgency, we have to systematically analyze our bird data, suggest insightful conservation measures, and act before it is too late.

Thanking you,

Yours in Bird Conservation

S. Sridhar, Publisher, NLBW

